

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : **CRIMINAL NO. 02-**
v. : **DATE FILED: _____**
ROGER VELLA, JR. : **VIOLATIONS: 18 U.S.C. § 1962(d)**
 : **(RICO Conspiracy - 1 Count)**

I N F O R M A T I O N

**COUNT ONE
(RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY)**

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CHARGES:

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Enterprise

1. During the period from in or around the Fall of 1993 and continuing up to on or about October 23, 2000, defendant

ROGER VELLA, JR.

and Ralph Natale, Joseph Merlino, a/k/a “Skinny Joey,” George Borgesi, and others known and unknown to the United States Attorney, were members of, and were associated with, an Enterprise as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 1961(4), namely, a group of individuals associated in fact, although not a legal entity, which Enterprise was engaged in, and the activities of which, affected interstate and foreign commerce. This Enterprise constituted an ongoing organization whose members functioned as a continuing unit for a common purpose of

achieving the objectives of the enterprise.

Structure Of The Enterprise

2. The Enterprise was known variously as “La Cosa Nostra,” “the LCN,” “the Mafia,” “the mob,” and “the Philadelphia La Cosa Nostra (LCN) family.” The Philadelphia LCN family was one of a number of LCN families based in a number of cities throughout the United States. The Philadelphia LCN family has been in substantially continuous operation for decades. Among other methods, the Enterprise was perpetuated by a requirement of secrecy and by limiting the knowledge and activities of those associated with it. At all times relevant to this Information, the Enterprise had a structure and chain-of-command, which is described below.

3. The Enterprise was headed by a boss and had a second-in-command or "underboss," also referred to as the "under." The Enterprise had an advisor known as a consigliere, also referred to as a "consig." Below the boss and underboss the Enterprise had leaders known as caporegimes, also referred to as "capos," "capi," "captains" and “skippers.” Beneath the capos the Enterprise had "soldiers" who worked under the direction of the Enterprise's leaders described above.

4. The boss, underboss, consigliere, caporegimes and soldiers at various times were initiated as "members" of the Enterprise at a "making" ceremony. These persons were referred to as "made" members of the Enterprise.

5. In addition to the “made” members of the Enterprise described above, the Enterprise also had associates who worked for the Enterprise in carrying out its illegal activities under the direction of the "made" members described above. Both the "made" members and the associates conducted and participated in the conduct of the Enterprise's affairs through a pattern

of racketeering activity and through the collection of unlawful debts.

6. During the period covered by this Information, that is from in or about the Fall of 1993 and continuing up to on or about October 23, 2000, persons known to the United States Attorney to be the Boss or Acting Boss of the Enterprise included Ralph Natale and later, Joseph Merlino. During the period covered by this Information, persons known to be the Underboss of the Enterprise included, Joseph Merlino. During the period covered by this Information, persons known to be Consiglieri and Acting Consiglieri of the Enterprise included George Borgesi. During the period covered by this Information, "associates" of the Enterprise included defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.**, as well as others, known and unknown to the United States Attorney.

Purpose Of The Enterprise

7. At all times relevant to this Information, the purpose of the Enterprise referred to above, was to control, manage, finance, supervise, participate in, and set policy concerning the making of money for the Enterprise through illegal means.

Manner And Means Of The Enterprise

8. Among the manner and means whereby defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** and his coconspirators conducted and participated in the conduct of the affairs of the Enterprise were the following:

a. To supervise and control the activities of the Enterprise, the "made" members selected leaders, including a boss, underboss, consigliere, and caporegimes.

b. To enforce the rules of the Enterprise, to promote discipline, and to ensure the continued receipt of money to the Enterprise, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** and his coconspirators threatened, assaulted, conspired to threaten, assault, murdered, attempted to

murder, and conspired to murder those members and associates of the Enterprise who violated the Enterprise's rules, questioned its authority, or posed a threat to the operations of the Enterprise. Among other things, if a person was believed to be a witness or potential witness in a judicial proceeding against a member or associate of the Enterprise, defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and his coconspirators, would look for opportunities to threaten, intimidate, assault and on occasions, murder said witnesses in order to preserve the Enterprise and its members and associates.

c. Through the use of force and violence, threats of force and exploitation of its decades-long violent reputation, the Enterprise, that is, the Philadelphia La Cosa Nostra family, asserted and attempted to assert primacy over the criminal underworld in general and criminal businesses in particular within the geographical area under its control. Thus, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** and his coconspirators claimed the right on behalf of the Enterprise to impose a "street tax" on other criminal organizations, the right to partnership shares in other criminal business' profits, the right to take over other criminal businesses outright, and the power to prohibit individual criminals and criminal organizations from competing in areas of criminal endeavor.

d. To perpetuate the Enterprise, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** and his coconspirators coordinated their activities with, and assisted and sought assistance from, other criminal organizations, including, among others, La Cosa Nostra Families in other cities, and the Pagan Motorcycle Club in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

e. To generate income for the Enterprise, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** and his coconspirators engaged in money making criminal activities, including:

i. the extortion of money and other things of value from persons who

were involved in criminal activity, including:

- a. outright demands for money;
 - b. the extortion of edgework and layoff bets from illegal bookmakers as a condition of being allowed to stay in the sports bookmaking business without suffering business interference or physical violence;
 - c. the forcing of others to accept members and associates of the Enterprise as partners in their illegal businesses;
 - d. the placing of bets with independent bookmakers coupled with the practice of enforcing payments if the bets won and refusing and avoiding payment if the bets lost; and
 - e. demands for controlled substances, including cocaine, and marijuana, for free or for prices drastically below the current street value.
- ii. the extortion of money and other things of value from persons who were involved in legitimate businesses;
- iii. the operation of illegal gambling businesses involving numbers operations, sports bookmaking and gambling machines, including video poker machines;
- iv. the manufacture of controlled substances, including methamphetamine;
- v. the distribution of controlled substances including,

methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana and phenyl-2-propane (P2P);

vi. the making of unlawful loans and extensions of credit, and the collection thereof using the Enterprise's violent reputation to force victims to repay loans and to pay interest at usurious rates;

vii. the extortion of money through the practice of trading on the violent reputation of the Enterprise to induce victims to "loan" money to members and associates of the Enterprise who would keep the money and repay little, if any, of the "loan";

f. To compensate the leadership of the Enterprise, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** and his coconspirators would and did distribute part of the income from their illegal activities to the leadership of the Enterprise.

THE RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY

9. From in or about the Fall of 1993 to on or about October 23, 2000, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, defendant

ROGER VELLA, JR.

and Ralph Natale, Joseph Merlino, a/k/a "Skinny Joey," George Borgesi, named herein as coconspirators but not as defendants, and others known and unknown to the United States Attorney, being persons employed by and associated with the Enterprise, as defined by Title 18, United States Code, Section 1961(4), and as set forth in the Introduction above, did unlawfully, willfully and knowingly, combine, conspire, confederate, and agree together and with each other and with other coconspirators known and unknown to the United States Attorney, to conduct and participate, directly and indirectly, in the conduct of the affairs of the Enterprise, which was engaged in, and the activities of which affected, interstate and foreign commerce, through a

pattern of Racketeering Activity, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1961(1) and 1961(5), and through the collection of unlawful debts as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 1961(6), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1962(c) as set forth below.

A. PATTERN OF RACKETEERING

10. The pattern of racketeering activity consisted of multiple acts indictable under the following laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the State of New Jersey, and the United States of America:

- (a) Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated, Sections 903 and 2502 (Conspiracy to commit murder);
- (b) Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated, Section 2502(a) (Murder);
- (c) Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated, Sections 3923(a)(1), 3923(a)(7) and 903 (Extortion and Conspiracy to commit extortion);
- (d) New Jersey Statutes Annotated Sections 2C:20-5(a), 2C:20-5(g), and 2C:5-2 (Extortion and Conspiracy to commit extortion);
- (e) Title 18 United States Code Section 1951 (Extortion and Conspiracy to commit extortion);
- (f) Title 18, United States Code, Section 894(a)(1) (Collections and Conspiracy to collect extensions of credit through extortionate means);
- (g) Title 21, United States Code, Section 846 (Conspiracy to distribute

controlled substances);

(h) Title 21, United States Code, Section 841 (Distributions of controlled substances); and

(i) Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1512(b)(2) and (3) (Obstruction of justice).

11. It was a further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** agreed that at least one coconspirator would commit at least two acts of racketeering activity in the conduct of the affairs of the Enterprise.

MANNER AND MEANS

12. Among the manner and means by which defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and others, conducted and participated in the affairs of the Enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity, and accomplished and attempted to accomplish the objectives of the conspiracy, were the following:

Murder (Aiding and Abetting the Murder of William Veasey)

13. During the period from in or about January 1995 through in or about October 1995, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.**, knowingly and willfully aided and abetted other persons known and unknown to the United States Attorney to willfully, deliberately and with premeditation, intentionally kill and murder William Veasey.

14. On or about October 5, 1995, in violation of Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated, Section 2502(a), William Veasey was shot and killed in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania.

(Conspiracy to Murder Ronald Turchi, Sr.)

15. From in or about March 1999 through on or about October 26, 1999, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.**, did unlawfully and feloniously agree with persons known and unknown to the United States Attorney, to murder Ronald Turchi, Sr.

16. On or about October 25, 1999, in violation of Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated, Section 2502(a), Ronald Turchi, Sr. was shot and killed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

(Conspiracy To Extort “Street Tax” and Protection Money, and Extortions)

17. From in or about the Fall of 1993, and continuing up to on or about October 23, 2000 in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the District of New Jersey and elsewhere, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** conspired with other persons known and unknown to the United States Attorney, in a systematic scheme to obtain and withhold property of others by threatening to commit other criminal offenses and to inflict economic harm, in violation of Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Annotated, Sections 3923(a)(1), 3923(a)(7) and 903, and to inflict bodily injury, to commit other criminal offenses and to inflict economic harm, in violation of New Jersey Statutes Annotated Sections 2C:20-5(a), 2C:20-5(g), and 2C:5-2.

(a) It was further part of the conspiracy that coconspirators Ralph Natale and Joseph Merlino, a/k/a “Skinny Joey” approved and supervised this scheme to obtain money and property for the Enterprise through extortions and illegal demands for money.

(b) It was further part of the conspiracy that on numerous occasions defendant

ROGER VELLA JR. and his coconspirators would and did extort bookmakers, numbers operators, drug dealers and individuals conducting criminal activity in the Philadelphia and southern New Jersey area by demanding, through threats and intimidation, a “street tax,” “tribute payment,” or, at times, a partnership in return for permission to continue to conduct criminal activity. Defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and his coconspirators also demanded "Christmas presents" that were in reality extortionate shakedowns. They also demanded "loans" that they never intended to repay.

(c) It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and his coconspirators would and did extort sports bookmaking and numbers operators by forcing them to turn “edge work” in, or “lay-off” to, Enterprise-controlled bookmaking offices, thereby forcing them to do business with the Enterprise.

(d) It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and his coconspirators extorted sports bookmaking and numbers operators.

(e) It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and his coconspirators extorted narcotics dealers in the Philadelphia area by demanding, through threats and intimidation, a “street tax” or “tribute payment,” in return for permission to continue to conduct criminal activity.

(f) It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA JR.** and his coconspirators cultivated a violent image and reputation for the Enterprise and for themselves as members of the Enterprise in order to discourage resistance to their extortionate demands and exploited the Enterprise's image and reputation in conducting these extortions.

(Conspiracy to Collect Extensions of Credit by Extortionate Means, and Collections)

18. In or about the Fall of 1993 up to and including on or about October 23, 2000, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** conspired with other coconspirators known and unknown to the United States Attorney, to use extortionate means to collect and attempt to collect extensions of credit made to various individuals by members of the Enterprise, by threatening the debtors, directly and indirectly, with physical violence if the debts were not repaid and to punish debtors for the nonpayment of debts, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 894(a)(1).

(Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances and Distributions)

19. At various times during the period from in or about the Fall of 1993 and continuing up to on or about March 31, 2001 in Philadelphia, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** did conspire with other various conspirators known and unknown to the United States Attorney, to knowingly and intentionally distribute in excess of five (5) kilograms of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, a Schedule II narcotic controlled substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(A).

20. In furtherance of the conspiracy, in or around the Fall of 1993, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** distributed in excess of 100 pounds of marijuana, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846.

21. In furtherance of the conspiracy, in or about May, 1994, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** possessed five (5) kilograms of cocaine with intent to distribute and distributed three (3) kilograms of cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846.

22. In furtherance of the conspiracy, on or about March 1, 1996, defendant **ROGER**

VELLA, JR. possessed approximately 231 grams of cocaine with intent to distribute, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846.

(Obstruction of Justice)

23. In or about June 1999, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** did conspire with other persons known and unknown to the United States Attorney to intimidate another person with the intent to cause and induce that person to withhold testimony in an official proceeding, and with the intent to hinder, delay and prevent the communication of information to a law enforcement officer or judge of the United States relating to the commission or possible commission of a Federal offense in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1512(b)(2) and (3).

24. In or about September 2000, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** did conspire with other persons known and unknown to the United States Attorney to intimidate, use physical force and threaten persons known to the United States Attorney, and did knowingly attempt to intimidate, use physical force and threaten persons known to the United States Attorney with the intent to cause and induce the persons to withhold testimony in an official proceeding, and with the intent to hinder, delay and prevent the communication of information to a law enforcement officer or judge of the United States relating to the commission or possible commission of a Federal offense in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1512(b)(2) and (3).

B. THE COLLECTION OF UNLAWFUL DEBTS

25. It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** agreed to conduct and participate, directly and indirectly, in the conduct of the affairs of the Enterprise, which was engaged in and the activities of which affected interstate and foreign commerce, through the collection of unlawful debts, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 1961(6), that is, the collection of debts which were incurred and contracted in gambling activity which was in violation of the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania [Title 18, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Section 5514] and the State of New Jersey [New Jersey Statutes Annotated, 2C:37-2] and which were incurred in connection with the business of gambling in violation of the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey.

26. It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant **ROGER VELLA, JR.** agreed to conduct and participate, directly and indirectly, in the conduct of the affairs of the Enterprise, which was engaged in and the activities of which affected interstate and foreign commerce, through the collection of unlawful debts, as defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 1961(6), that is, the collection of debts which were incurred in connection with the business of lending money or a thing of value at a rate usurious under Federal law, where the usurious rate is at least twice the enforceable rate.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1962(d).

PATRICK L. MEEHAN
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Date: _____